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In the Claims:

1. *(currently amended)* A connector for joining a first piece of sheet metal and a second piece of sheet metal together end-to-end, wherein said connector has a length and a longitudinal center line, wherein the first piece of sheet metal has a raw free end with at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection thereon, and wherein the second piece of sheet metal has a raw free end with at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection thereon and a joggle inward of the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection thereon, said connector comprising:

a) a first wall;

b) a second wall;

c) a ledge; **[[and]]**

d) a third wall;

e) a fourth wall; and

f) a flange;

wherein said second wall and said first wall define a first channel therebetween;

wherein said ledge extends inwardly from said second wall;

wherein said ledge extends into said first channel;

wherein said first channel is for lockingly receiving the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal by virtue of the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal spreading said second wall away from said first wall as the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal slips through said first channel until such time as the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal just clears said ledge causing said second wall to unspread, and in so doing, causes the at least one wedge-

shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal to be snapingly engaged onto, and lockingly captured against, said ledge, and in so doing, the first piece of sheet metal is secured in said connector;

wherein said third wall terminates in a free edge;

wherein said free edge of said third wall is folded inwardly onto itself so as to form a folded free edge;

wherein said third wall and said first wall define a second channel therebetween;

wherein said second channel is for lockingly receiving the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal by virtue of the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal spreading said third wall away from said first wall as the second piece of sheet metal slips through said second channel until such time as the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal just clears said folded free edge of said third wall causing said third wall to unspread, and in so doing, causes the at least wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal to be snapingly engaged onto, and lockingly captured against, said folded free edge of said third wall, and in so doing, the second piece of sheet metal is secured in said connector;

wherein said first channel and said second channel open in opposite directions from each other for joining the first piece of sheet metal and the second piece of sheet metal together end-to-end; **[[and]]**

wherein said first channel and said second channel are offset relative to each other, and as a result thereof, requires the joggle on the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal to offset the second piece of sheet metal so as to allow insertion of the other raw

free end of the second piece of sheet metal into said first channel of a next connector without a need for field dressing;

wherein said fourth wall extends from said ledge to a terminal edge;

wherein said flange extends outwardly from said fourth wall;

wherein said flange structurally stiffens said connector;

wherein said flange has a free edge; and

wherein said free edge of said flange is folded onto itself in a direction away from said ledge so as to form a folded free edge.

2. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 1, wherein said connector is made from one continuous piece of pliable sheet metal; and
wherein said one continuous piece of pliable sheet metal is bent, rolled, and molded to form said connector.

3. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 2, wherein said one continuous piece of pliable sheet metal has a thickness; and
wherein said thickness of said one continuous piece of sheet metal ranges from eighteen to twenty-four gauge.

4. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 2, wherein said one continuous piece of pliable sheet metal is galvanized sheet steel to combat corrosion.

5. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 1, wherein said connector is made from extruded plastic.

6-7. *(cancelled)*

8. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 1, further comprising an adhesive sealing compound;

wherein said adhesive sealing compound material is highly viscous;

wherein said adhesive sealing compound material fills said first channel;

wherein said adhesive sealing compound material adheres to said first channel;

wherein said adhesive sealing compound material is for adhering to the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal;

wherein said adhesive sealing compound material is for sealing the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal in said first channel against leakage of a material flowing along the first piece of sheet metal;

wherein said adhesive sealing compound material fills said second channel;

wherein said adhesive sealing compound material adheres to said second channel;

wherein said adhesive sealing compound material is for adhering to the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal; and

wherein said adhesive sealing compound material is for sealing the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal in said second channel against leakage of a material flowing along the second piece of sheet metal.

9. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 1, wherein said first wall is flat;

wherein said second wall is flat; and

wherein said third wall is flat.

10. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 1, wherein said second wall is parallel to said first wall; and

wherein said third wall is parallel to said first wall.

11. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 1, wherein said second wall is slightly spaced from one side of said first wall so as to allow said first channel to be narrow; and

wherein said third wall is slightly spaced from the other side of said first wall so as to allow said second channel to be narrow.

12. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 1, wherein said second wall is one-piece with said first wall;

wherein said second wall is bent from one longitudinal edge of said first wall to fold thereover in a direction towards the other longitudinal edge of said first wall;

wherein said third wall is one-piece with said first wall; and

wherein said third wall is bent from the other longitudinal edge of said first wall to fold thereunder in a direction towards said one longitudinal edge of said first wall.

13. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 1, wherein said first channel opens laterally so as to form a lateral opening;

wherein said lateral opening of said first channel is for receiving the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal;

wherein said second channel opens laterally so as to form a lateral opening; and

wherein said lateral opening of said second channel is for receiving the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal.

14. *(currently amended)* The connector as defined in claim **[[7]] 1**, wherein said second wall terminates in a terminal edge;

wherein said terminal edge of said second wall is disposed in close proximity to said longitudinal center line of said connector;

wherein said terminal edge of said second wall is disposed to one side of said longitudinal center line of said connector;

wherein said folded free edge of said third wall is disposed in close proximity to said longitudinal center line of said connector;

wherein said folded free edge of said third wall is disposed to the other side of said longitudinal center line of said connector;

wherein said ledge extends perpendicularly from said second wall;

wherein said ledge extends inwardly from said terminal edge of said second wall to a terminal edge;

wherein said terminal edge of said ledge is slightly spaced from said first wall;

wherein said fourth wall extends from said terminal edge of said ledge to a terminal edge; and

wherein said terminal edge of said fourth wall is disposed in substantial alignment with said folded free edge of said third wall.

15. *(currently amended)* The connector as defined in claim **[[6]] 1**, wherein said fourth wall is flat;

wherein said fourth wall is parallel to said first wall;

wherein said fourth wall is parallel to said second wall; and

wherein said fourth wall is parallel to said third wall.

16. *(currently amended)* The connector as defined in claim **[[6]]** **1**, wherein said fourth wall has a drill rail;

wherein said drill rail extends said length of said connector;

wherein said drill rail is for preventing a self-tapping sheet metal screw being screwed into said fourth wall from skipping thereacross; and

wherein said self-tapping sheet metal screw is for screwing into said fourth wall, the first piece of sheet metal, said first wall, the second piece of sheet metal, and said third wall if required in order to comply to a local building code.

17. *(currently amended)* The connector as defined in claim 14, wherein said flange is flat.

wherein said flange extends outwardly from said terminal edge of said fourth wall to a free edge;

wherein said flange extends in a direction away from said first wall;

wherein said flange extends in a direction away from said second wall;

wherein said flange extends in a direction away from said third wall;

wherein said folded free edge of said flange further structurally stiffens said connector; and

wherein said folded free edge of said flange is for eliminating a sharp edge.

18. *(currently amended)* The connector as defined in claim **[[7]]** **1**, wherein said first wall extends said length of said connector;

wherein said second wall extends said length of said connector;

wherein said third wall extends said length of said connector;

wherein said ledge extends said length of said connector;

wherein said fourth wall extends said length of said connector; and

wherein said flange extends said length of said connector.

19. *(currently amended)* The connector as defined in claim **[[7]]** **1**, wherein said flange has a height; and

wherein said height of said flange is directly proportional to said length of said connector.

20. *(original)* The connector as defined in claim 19, wherein said height of said flange is in a range of approximately ⅜ inches to approximately 1⅜ inches.

21. *(currently amended)* Two pieces of sheet metal for being joined together end-to–end by a connector, wherein the connector has a first wall, a second wall, a ledge, **[[and]]** a third wall, **a fourth wall, and a flange,** wherein the second wall of the connector and the first wall of the connector define a first channel therebetween, wherein the ledge of the connector extends inwardly from the second wall of the connector, into the first channel of the connector, wherein the third wall of the connector terminates in a free edge, wherein the free edge of the third wall of the connector is folded inwardly onto itself so as to form a folded free edge, wherein the third wall of the connector and the first wall of the connector define a second channel therebetween, wherein the first channel of the connector and the second channel of the connector open in opposite directions from each other, **[[and]]** wherein the first channel of the connector and the second channel of the connector are offset relative to each other, **wherein said fourth wall extends from said ledge to a terminal edge, wherein said flange extends outwardly from said fourth wall, wherein said flange structurally stiffens said**

connector, wherein said flange has a free edge, and wherein said free edge of said flange is folded onto itself in a direction away from said ledge so as to form a folded free edge, said two pieces of sheet metal comprising:

a) a first piece of sheet metal; and

b) a second piece of sheet metal;

wherein said first piece of sheet metal has a raw free end;

wherein said raw free end of said first piece of sheet metal has at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection thereon;

wherein said second piece of sheet metal has a raw free end;

wherein said raw free end of said second piece of sheet metal has at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection thereon;

wherein said raw free end of said second piece of sheet metal has a joggle;

wherein said joggle is inward of said at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on said raw free end of said second piece of sheet metal;

wherein said joggle on said raw free end of said second piece of sheet metal offsets said second piece of sheet metal for allowing insertion of the other raw free end of said second piece of sheet metal into the first channel of a next connector without a need for field dressing;

wherein said raw free end of said first piece of sheet metal is for being lockingly received in the first channel of the connector by virtue of said at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on said raw free end of said first piece of sheet metal spreading the second wall of the connector away from the first wall of the connector as said raw free end of said first piece of sheet metal slips through the first channel of the connector until such time as said at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on said raw free end of said first piece of sheet metal just clears

the ledge of the connector causing the second wall of the connector to unspread, and in so doing, causes said at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on said raw free end of said first piece of sheet metal to be snapingly engaged onto, and lockingly captured against, the ledge of the connector, and in so doing, said first piece of sheet metal is secured in the connector;

wherein said raw free end of said second piece of sheet metal is for being lockingly received in the second channel of the connector by virtue of said at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on said raw free end of said second piece of sheet metal spreading the third wall of the connector away from the first wall of the connector as said second piece of metal slips through the second channel of the connector until such time as said at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on said raw free end of said second piece of sheet metal just clears the folded free edge of the third wall of the connector causing the third wall of the connector to unspread, and in so doing, causes said at least wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on said raw free end of said second piece of sheet metal to be snapingly engaged onto, and lockingly captured against, the folded free edge of the third wall of the connector, and in so doing, said second piece of sheet metal is secured in the connector.

22. *(currently amended)* A connector for securely receiving a piece of sheet metal, wherein the piece of sheet metal has a raw free end with at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection thereon, said connector comprising:

a) a first wall;

b) a second wall;

c) a ledge; **[[and]]**

d) a third wall;

e) a fourth wall; and

f) a flange;

wherein said second wall and said first wall define a channel therebetween;

wherein said ledge extends inwardly from said second wall;

wherein said ledge extends into said channel;

wherein said channel is for lockingly receiving the raw free end of the piece of sheet metal by virtue of the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the piece of sheet metal spreading said second wall away from said first wall as the raw free end of the piece of sheet metal slips through said channel until such time as the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the piece of sheet metal just clears said ledge causing said second wall to unspread, and in so doing, causes the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the piece of sheet metal to be snapingly engaged onto, and lockingly captured against, said ledge, and in so doing, the piece of sheet metal is secured in said connector;

wherein said third wall has a raw free end;

wherein said raw free end of said third wall is for insertion into said channel of a next connector;

wherein said third wall has a joggle thereon;

wherein said joggle is inward of said raw free end of said third wall; **[[and]]**

wherein said joggle on said third wall offsets said third wall so as to allow insertion of said raw free end of said third wall into said channel of said next connector without a need for field dressing**;**

wherein said fourth wall extends from said ledge to a terminal edge;

wherein said flange extends outwardly from said fourth wall;

wherein said flange structurally stiffens said connector;

wherein said flange has a free edge; and

wherein said free edge of said flange is folded onto itself in a direction away from said ledge so as to form a folded free edge.

23. *(currently amended)* A connector for joining a first piece of sheet metal and a second piece of sheet metal together end-to-end, wherein said connector has a length and a longitudinal center line, wherein the first piece of sheet metal has a raw free end with at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection thereon, and wherein the second piece of sheet metal has a joggle thereon, said connector comprising:

a) a first wall;

b) a second wall;

c) a ledge; and

d) a third wall;

e) a fourth wall; and

f) a flange;

wherein said second wall and said first wall define a first channel therebetween;

wherein said ledge extends inwardly from said second wall;

wherein said ledge extends into said first channel;

wherein said first channel is for lockingly receiving the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal by virtue of the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal spreading said second wall away from said first wall as the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal slips through said first channel until such time as the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock

projection on the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal just clears said ledge causing said second wall to unspread, and in so doing, causes the at least one wedge-shaped reverse button lock projection on the raw free end of the first piece of sheet metal to be snapingly engaged onto, and lockingly captured against, said ledge, and in so doing, the first piece of sheet metal is secured in said connector;

wherein said third wall terminates in a free edge;

wherein said free edge of said third wall is folded inwardly onto itself so as to form a folded free edge;

wherein said third wall and said first wall define a second channel therebetween;

wherein said second channel is for lockingly receiving the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal;

wherein said first channel and said second channel open in opposite directions from each other for joining the first piece of sheet metal and the second piece of sheet metal together end-to-end; **[[and]]**

wherein said first channel and said second channel are offset relative to each other, and as a result thereof, requires the joggle on the raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal to offset the second piece of sheet metal so as to allow insertion of the other raw free end of the second piece of sheet metal into said first channel of a next connector without a need for field dressing**;**

wherein said fourth wall extends from said ledge to a terminal edge;

wherein said flange extends outwardly from said fourth wall;

wherein said flange structurally stiffens said connector;

wherein said flange has a free edge; and

wherein said free edge of said flange is folded onto itself in a direction away from said ledge so as to form a folded free edge.

24-32. *(cancelled)*